

STUDY V

THE MEDIATOR OF THE ATONEMENT

"MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN"

AND "TOUCHED WITH A FEELING

OF OUR INFIRMITIES"

Who "His Brethren" are--In What the Likeness Consisted--How He was Tempted in all Points, Like as We are Tempted, Yet Without Sin--The Wilderness Temptations--Their Resemblance to ours--Some of which would "Deceive if it were Possible the Very Elect"--In What Sense our Lord was Made Perfect through Sufferings--Though a Son, yet Learned He Obedience--How He was Made in the Likeness of Sinful Flesh--Yet Without Sin--"Himself took our Infirmities"--How He was "Touched."

"In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God--to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." *Heb. 2:17*

THE TWO popular but opposing lines of thought touch and conflict in respect to all the various Scriptural statements which declare our Lord's relationship to mankind; and the third or truth line alone is able to either reconcile the various scriptures or to satisfy sanctified reason. Of the two false but popular theories one claims that our Lord Jesus was the Almighty God, Jehovah, who merely garbed himself in human flesh, without really having actual sensibility of humanity's trials, temptations and environments. The other theory claims that he was a sinful man, partaker of the blemishes of our race, just as others, but more successful than others in combating and resisting the motions of sin. We are endeavoring to show that both of these theories are erroneous, and that the truth lies between them, in the fact that the *Logos* "being in a form of God," a spirit being, when "*made flesh*" was really *a man*, "The *man* Christ Jesus," but "*separate* from sinners," a *perfect* man prepared to be the "corresponding price" for the first perfect man whose fall

involved our race, and whose redemption also involves the race.

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It is quite proper in this connection, therefore, in seeking to establish the Scripturally correct view of this subject, that we examine various scriptures which have been distorted and misused to prove that our Lord was blemished, and subject to like passions with the fallen race. We hold that if he had been in this condition it would have been as impossible for him as it is impossible for us to keep absolutely and perfectly every feature of the Divine Law. The Divine Law is the full measure of the *perfect* man's ability and is beyond the measure and ability of any man who is not perfect. Hence, the very fact that in our Lord was no sin, the very fact that he was pleasing to the Father, and acceptable as a sin-offering, as a ransom-price for Adam (and the race lost in him), proves indirectly his perfection, as we hold that the Scriptures everywhere teach it.

But our Lord's "brethren" were not immaculate, were not separate from sinners. How, then, could he be "made like unto his brethren," and yet be separate from sinners? The answer to this question is found in the recognition of the fact that the world of mankind, sinners in general, are not the ones who are referred to as "his brethren." The man Adam, indeed, was a son of God at his creation, and up to the time of his transgression (**Luke 3:38**), but not subsequently. And all of his race are Scripturally designated "children of wrath." (**Eph. 2:3**) Only those who have "escaped the condemnation that is on the world," and who have gotten back into harmony with God, through Christ, are Scripturally authorized to consider themselves the sons of God. (**John 1:12**) Of the others, our Lord declares, "Ye are of your father, the devil, for his works ye do." (**John 8:44**) Our Lord Jesus never counted himself in as one of the children of the devil, nor as one of the "children of wrath," but declared that he "proceeded forth and came from God." Neither did he recognize as "his brethren" any of those who were still "children of wrath." The only ones recognized as the "Lord's brethren" are those who, having escaped the condemnation that is on the world, have been

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brought nigh to the Father through the blood of Christ, and have received "the spirit of adoption" into God's family,

and the promise of full "adoption of sons" at the establishment of the Kingdom. (*Rom. 8:15,23; Gal. 4:5*) It is because these are *justified*, reckonedly freed from Adamic guilt and reckonedly constituted righteous, through the blood of Christ, that they are in any sense of the word like our Lord Jesus, "his brethren," on a similar footing of divine favor and separateness from the world. Of the consecrated of this class our Lord says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "I have chosen you out of the world." (*John 15:19; 17:16*) From this standpoint it can readily be seen that our Lord *was* "made like unto his brethren"--*exactly*, in every particular. Not that his "brethren" were in this condition at the time he humbled himself and was made flesh--he had no brethren at that time, except as this class was *foreknown* of God. (*Eph. 1:5,11; Rom. 8:29*) But the divine arrangement was such that God foresaw that he could be just, and yet justify those of the sinner race who accepted divine grace through Christ, and whose sins were, on this account, covered, not imputed to them, but imputed to him who "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." God forearranged, foreknew, his purpose to call out the Gospel Church to be "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord," to the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. And it was in view of this prearranged plan that all who will constitute this class were spoken of in advance, through the prophets, as the "brethren" of Christ. Prophetically, our Lord is represented as saying to the Father, "I have declared thy name unto *my brethren*; in the midst of the Church have I sung thy praise." (*Psa. 22:22; Heb. 2:12*) Since this was the divine program--that our Lord should not only be the Redeemer of the world, but also a *pattern* for the "brethren" who would be his joint-heirs--therefore, in carrying out this divine program it was fitting that he should in all his trials and experiences be "made like unto his brethren."

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"He Was Tempted in All Points Like as We

Are, Yet Without Sin"

--*Heb. 4:15*--

It will be noticed that this statement is not that our Lord was tempted in all points like as the world is tempted, but

like as we, his followers, are tempted. He was not tempted along the lines of depraved appetites for sinful things, received by heredity, from an earthly parentage; but being holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, he was tempted along the same lines as his followers of this Gospel age--who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; and who are judged not according to the infirmities of their flesh, but according to the spirit of their minds--according to their new wills, new hearts. *Rom. 8:4; 2 Cor. 5:16; John 8:15*

This is seen very clearly in connection with our Lord's temptations in the wilderness, which immediately followed his consecration and baptism at Jordan. *Matt. 4:1-11*

(1) The first was Satan's suggestion that he use the divine power which he had just received at Jordan, in ministering to his own wants, converting the stones into bread. This was not a temptation in any degree traceable to heredity or imperfection. Our Lord had been forty days without food, studying the divine plan, seeking to determine, under the enlightening influence of the holy Spirit, just received, what would be his proper course in life, to fulfil the great mission upon which he had come into the world, viz., the world's redemption. The suggestion that he use the spiritual power conferred upon him, and which he realized was in his possession, to minister to the necessities of his flesh, would, at first thought, seem reasonable; but our Lord at once discerned that such a use of his spiritual gift would be wrong, would be a misuse of it, a use for which it was not intended, and hence he rejected the suggestion, saying, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every

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word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Lord's "brethren" sometimes have similar temptations of the Adversary, suggestions to use spiritual gifts for the furtherance of temporal interests. Suggestions of this kind are insidious, and are the channels through which God's consecrated people not infrequently are led astray by the Adversary to greater and greater misuse of divine blessings.

(2) The Adversary suggested to our Lord fakir methods of introducing his mission to the people--that he leap from a pinnacle of the temple into the valley below in the sight of the multitude; so that their seeing him survive uninjured would be a proof to them of his superhuman power, which would lead them at once to accept him as the Messiah, and to cooperate with him in the work before him. But our

Lord saw at once that such methods were wholly out of harmony with the divine arrangement, and even the misapplication of a scripture by the Adversary (*apparently* in favor of the wrong) did not swerve him from the principles of righteousness. He immediately replied to the effect that such a procedure on his part would be a tempting of divine providence, wholly unwarranted, and hence not to be considered for a moment. Where duty called or danger the Master did not hesitate, but realized the Father's ability to keep every interest; but true confidence in God does not involve a reckless exposure to danger, without divine command, and merely for a show, and in a spirit of braggadocio.

The Lord's brethren have temptations along this line also, and need to remember this lesson and example set before them by the Captain of our Salvation. We are not to rush unbidden into dangers, and esteem ourselves thus valiant soldiers of the cross. "Daredevil deeds" may not seem out of place to the children of the devil, but they are wholly improper in the children of God. The latter have a warfare which requires still greater courage. They are called upon to perform services which the world does not applaud, nor

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even appreciate, but often persecutes. They are called upon to endure ignominy, and the scoffs of the world; yea, and to have the uncircumcised of heart "say all manner of evil" against them falsely for Christ's sake. In this respect the followers of the Captain of our Salvation pass along the same road, and walk in the footsteps of their Captain. And it requires greater courage to ignore the shame and ignominy of the world, in the disesteemed service of God, than to perform some great and wonderful feat, that would cause the natural man to wonder and admire.

One of the chief battles of those who walk this narrow way is against self-will; to bring their wills into fullest subjection to the Heavenly Father's will, and to keep them there; to rule their own hearts, crushing out the rising ambitions which are natural even to a perfect manhood; quenching these kindling fires, and presenting their bodies and all earthly interests living sacrifices in the service of the Lord and his cause. These were the trials in which our Captain gained his victory and its laurels, and these also are the trials of his "brethren." "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit [bringing it into full subordination to the will of God] than he that taketh a city:" greater also is such than he who,

with a false conception of faith, would leap from the pinnacle of a temple, or do some other foolhardy thing. True faith in God consists not in blind credulity and extravagant assumptions respecting his providential care: it consists, on the contrary, of a quiet confidence in all the exceeding great and precious promises which God has made, a confidence which enables the faithful to resist the various efforts of the world, the flesh and the devil, to distract his attention, and which follows carefully the lines of faith and obedience marked out for us in the divine Word.

(3) The third temptation of our Lord was to offer earthly dominion and speedy success in the establishment of his kingdom, without suffering and death, without the cross, upon condition of a compromise with the Adversary. The Adversary claimed, and his claim was not disputed, that he

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held control of the world, and that by his cooperation the Kingdom of Righteousness, which our Lord had come to institute, could be quickly established. Satan's intimation was that he had become weary of leading the world into sin, blindness, superstition, ignorance, and that he therefore had a sympathy with our Lord's mission, which was to help the poor, fallen race. What he wanted to retain, however, was a leading or controlling influence in the world; and hence the price of his turning the world over to a righteous course, the price of his cooperation with the Lord Jesus in a restitutionary blessing of the world, was, that the latter should recognize him, Satan, as the ruler of the world, in its reconstructed condition--that thus our Lord should do homage to him.

We are to remember that Satan's rebellion against the divine rule was instigated by ambition to be himself a monarch--"as the Most High." (*Isa. 14:14*) We recall that this was the primary motive of his successful attack upon our first parents in Eden--that he might alienate or separate them from God, and thus enslave them to himself. We can readily suppose that he would prefer to be monarch of happier subjects than the "groaning creation:" he would prefer subjects possessed of everlasting life. It would appear that even yet he does not recognize the fact that everlasting life and true happiness are impossible except in harmony with Divine law. Satan was therefore willing to become a reformer in all particulars except one--his ambition must be gratified--he must be no less the ruler amongst men; and was he not already "the Prince of this world"--and so acknowledged

in Holy Writ? (*John 14:30; 12:31; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4*)

Not that he had any divine commission to be "the prince of this world," but that by getting possession of mankind, through ignorance, and through misrepresentation of the false as the true, of darkness as the light, of wrong as the right, he had so confused, bewildered, blinded the world that he easily held the position of master or "god of this world, who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience" --the vast majority.

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The peculiar temptation of Satan's suggestion therefore was, that it seemed to offer a new solution of the question of the recovery of man out of his condition of sin. And more than this, it seemed to imply at least a partial repentance on the part of Satan, and the possibility of his recovery to a course of righteousness, provided he could be guaranteed the continued success of his ambition to be a ruler over subjects more happy and more prosperous than it was possible for them to be while kept under his delusions and enslaved by sin, which was the only way in which he could retain man's loyalty: because in proportion as mankind rejects sin and appreciates holiness, in that proportion it becomes desirous to serve and to worship God.

Our Lord Jesus did not long hesitate. He had absolute confidence that the Father's wisdom had adopted the best and only adequate plan. Therefore he not only did not confer with flesh and blood, but neither would he bargain with the Adversary for *cooperation* in the work of the world's uplift.

Here also we see one of the special besetments of the Adversary against the Lord's "brethren." He succeeded in tempting the nominal Church, early in her career, to abandon the way of the cross, the narrow way of separateness from the world, and to enter into a league with the civil power, and thus gradually to become influential in the world's politics. By cooperation with "the princes of this world," fostered and aided by the Adversary secretly, she sought to establish the reign of Christ on earth, through a representative, a pope, for whom it was claimed that he was Christ's vicegerent. We have seen what baneful influences resulted: how this counterfeit Kingdom of Christ became really a kingdom of the devil, for his work it did. We have seen the result in the "dark ages," and that the Lord denominates the system "Antichrist."*

And although the Reformation started in boldly, we find

that the Adversary again presented the same temptation before the Reformers, and we see that they resisted it only

*See Vol. II, Chap. ix.

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in part, that they were willing to compromise the truth for the sake of the protection and aid of "the kingdoms of this world," and in the hope that the kingdoms of this world would in some manner become the Kingdom of our Lord. But we see that the combination of the Church and the world influence, as represented in Protestantism, while less baneful in its results than Papacy's combination, is nevertheless very injurious, and a great hindrance to all who come under its influence. We see that the constant conflict of the "brethren" is to overcome this temptation of the Adversary, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free--not of the world, but separate from it.

Moreover, we find that although the same temptation comes to all the "brethren," it comes in slightly modified form from time to time, and that the great Adversary very cunningly, in every instance, attempts to do with us as with the Lord, viz., to present himself as a leader along the lines of reform which he advocates--appearing to be in hearty sympathy with the work of blessing the world. His latest temptation along this line comes in the form of the suggested "social uplift," which he is successfully bringing before the minds of many of the "brethren." He suggests now, that however necessary it once was to walk the "narrow way," the way of the cross, it is no longer necessary so to do; but that now we have reached the place where the whole matter may be easily and quickly accomplished, and the world in general lifted up to a high plane of social, intellectual, moral and religious standing. But the plans which he suggests always involve combination with him: in the present instance it is the suggestion that all who would be co-workers in the social uplift shall join in *social* and *political* movements, which shall bring about the desired end. And he has become so bold and so confident of the support of the majority that he no longer pretends to favor reform along the line of individual conversion from sin and salvation from condemnation, and reconciliation with the Father, through a personal faith in and consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ: his proposition is a social uplift, which shall ignore

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individual responsibilities and sins, and merely regard social conditions and make society outwardly "clean." He would have us disregard the Lord's teaching, to the effect that only those who come unto the Father through him are "sons of God," and his "brethren;" instead, he would have us believe that all men are brethren, and that God is the Father of all humanity, that none are "children of wrath," and that it is criminally unchristian and uncharitable to believe our Lord's words that some are of their "father, the devil." He would thus, without always so saying in specific terms, have us ignore and deny man's *fall into sin*, and ignore and deny the *ransom from sin*, and all the work of atonement; under the specious, deceptive watchword, "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man," and the Golden Rule.

This temptation of the Adversary before the "brethren" today is deceiving many, and probably will yet deceive all except "the very elect." (***Matt. 24:24***) These very elect "brethren," are those who follow closely in the Master's footsteps, and who, instead of hearkening to the Adversary's suggestions, hearken to the Word of the Lord. These very elect "brethren," instead of leaning to their own understandings, and to Satan's sophistries, have faith in the superior wisdom of Jehovah and his divine plan of the ages. Hence these are all "taught of God," and know thereby that the work of the present age is the selection of the "brethren" of Christ, and their testing, and finally their glorification with the Lord in the Kingdom, as the seed of Abraham, to bless the world; and that in the next age will come God's "due time" for the world's uplift, mental, moral and physical. Hence the very elect cannot be deceived by any of the specious arguments or sophistries of their wily foe. Moreover, the "brethren" are not ignorant of his devices, for they were forewarned along this line, and they are looking unto Jesus, who not only is the Author of their faith, through the sacrifice of himself, but also is to be the finisher of it, when he shall grant them a part in the first resurrection, and

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make them partakers of his excellent glory and divine nature.

Such are the points of temptation to the "brethren," and such were the points of temptation to their Captain. He was "*tempted in all points like as we are*" tempted; and he knows

how to succor those who are tempted, and who are willing to receive the succor which he gives, in the way in which he gives it--through the teachings of his Word and its exceeding great and precious promises. The weaknesses which come to us through heredity were no part of our Lord's temptation. He did not have a drunkard's appetite; he did not have a murderer's passion, nor a thief's avarice; he was holy, harmless, separate from sinners. Nor do his "brethren" have these besetments, as their temptations. Those who have become his "brethren" through faith, and consecration, and begetting of the holy Spirit of adoption, have lost the disposition which seeks to do injury to others, and have received instead the new mind, the mind of Christ, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, the holy Spirit--the spirit of love; which seeks first of all the Father's will, and secondly, seeks to do good unto all men, as it has opportunity, especially to the household of faith. **Gal. 6:10**

And though there remains in the flesh of these "new creatures," possessed of the new mind or new will, a weakness of heredity, a tendency toward passion or strife, so that they may need continually to keep on guard against these, and may occasionally be overtaken in a fault, contrary to their wills, nevertheless these unintentional weaknesses are not counted unto them as sins, nor as the acts of the "new creature," but merely as defects which belong to the old nature, which, so long as the new nature opposes them, are reckoned as covered by the merit of the ransom--the great sin-offering made by the Captain of our Salvation. It is the "new creature" alone that is being tried, tested, fitted, polished and prepared for joint-heirship with Christ in his Kingdom, and not the body of flesh, which, of such, is reckoned dead.

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"Made Perfect Through Suffering"

"It became him [the Father] for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings." **Heb. 2:10**

Having in mind the foregoing, it will be easy to see that our Lord was *not made perfect as a man*, through the things which he suffered as a man; nor did he suffer anything before he became a man. The thought of this scripture is that our Lord, when in the world, when he was already perfect

as a man, the very image of the Father in the flesh, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, attained, by his experiences and sufferings, another perfection--a perfection on another plane of being, gained since then. It was one thing that the *Logos* was perfect when with the Father before the world was--perfect in his being, and in his heart or will--perfectly loyal to the Father; it was another thing that when voluntarily he humbled himself to be made flesh, and to take our nature, a lower nature, he was perfect as a man--separate from sinners: it is still a third thing that he is *now perfect* in his present highly exalted condition, a sharer of the divine nature. It is to this latter that our text relates. So high an exaltation to the "glory, honor and immortality" of "the divine nature," made it proper in the divine wisdom that certain *tests* should be applied, the meeting of which should *make perfect* the title of God's Only Begotten Son to share all the riches of divine grace, and "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

We are to remember that it was in connection with these *tests* of his obedience to the Father that there was set before him a certain joy or prospect, as it is written--"For the *joy* that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." (*Heb. 12:2*) This joy before him, we may reasonably suppose, was:

(1) A joy to render a service which would be acceptable to the Father.

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(2) A joy to redeem mankind, and make possible their rescue from sin and death.

(3) A joy in the thought that by the accomplishment of this redemption he would be accounted worthy of the Father to be the mighty ruler and blessing, King and Priest of the world; to reveal to the world a knowledge of the divine plan, and to lift up from sin to divine grace whosoever would accept of the terms of the New Covenant.

(4) A joy that the Father had promised him; not only a return to the glory of spirit-being which he had with the Father before the world was, but a more excellent glory--to be exalted far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named, and to be made an associate in the Kingdom of the Universe, next to the Father--on the right of the majesty on high; and partaker of the divine nature, with its inherent or immortal life.

But all this joy set before our Lord was made contingent or dependent upon his full obedience to the Father's will.

True, he had always been obedient to the Father, and delighted in the Father's way, but never before had he been put to such a test as now. Hitherto it had been pleasurable and honorable to do the Father's will; now the test was to be whether or not he would do that will under conditions that would be distressing, painful, humiliating--conditions which would bring him finally not only to death, but even the ignominious death of the cross. He did stand this testing, and never faltered, never wavered, but manifested in every particular, and to the utmost, faith in the Father's Justice, Love, Wisdom and Power, and unhesitatingly endured all the oppositions and contradictions of sinners against himself, with all other besetments of the Adversary; and by this means; through suffering, he "*made perfect*" his title to all the joys set before him, and in consequence was perfected as a being of the very highest order, viz., "of the divine nature." Thus it was true of the Only Begotten of the Father that:

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**"Though He Were a Son
Yet Learned He Obedience by the Things
Which He Suffered
and Being Made Perfect He Became the Author
of Everlasting Salvation
Unto All Them that Obey Him."
--Heb. 5:8-10--**

The inspired Apostle thus explains that our Lord, already undefiled, perfect, already a "Son," already fully obedient to the Father under favorable conditions, *learned* what it meant to be obedient under most adverse conditions, and being thus tested and proved worthy of perfection on the highest plane of being, the divine nature, he was perfected in it when the Father raised him from the dead to the excellent glory set before him--to be, first, the Deliverer of the Church which is his body, and afterward, "in due time," of all who, being brought to a knowledge of

the Truth, will obey him.

Note the harmony between this and the Apostle Peter's testimony--"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus.... Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior." **Acts 5:31**

Thus our Lord Jesus demonstrated before the Father, before angels, and before us, his "brethren," his fidelity to the Father and to the principles of the Father's government. Thus he magnified the Father's law and made it honorable: demonstrating that it was not too exacting, that it was not beyond the ability of a perfect being, even under the most adverse conditions. We, his followers, may well rejoice with all of God's obedient and intelligent creation, saying, "Worthy the Lamb that was slain, to *receive* power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." **Rev. 5:12**

And as our Lord glorified is the Captain of our Salvation, it implies that all who would be soldiers of the cross, followers of this Captain and joint-heirs with him in the

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Kingdom, must likewise be *made perfect* as "new creatures" through trial and suffering. And as the sufferings through which the Captain was made perfect as a new creature were the things which he endured through the opposition of the world, the flesh and devil, and through the submission of his own will to the Father's will, so with us: our sufferings are not the ordinary sufferings of pain, such as the "groaning creation" shares, and which we share to some extent, as members of the world. The sufferings which count in the development of the "new creature" are those *voluntary* and *willing* endurances on account of the Lord and the Lord's Word and the Lord's people--the hardness which we endure, as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, while seeking to do not our own wills, but to have perfected in us the will of our Captain, the will of our Heavenly Father. Thus we are to walk in his footsteps, realizing his watchcare, and availing ourselves at the throne of the heavenly grace of his helps by the way; and trusting his promise that all things shall work together for good to us, and that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with every temptation provide a way of escape; and that in every trial he will grant grace sufficient--for every time of need. Thus are his "brethren" also now on trial and now being *made perfect* as new creatures in Christ--"made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." **Col. 1:12**

"In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh"

What the Law could not do, in that it was powerless because of the flesh [because all flesh was depraved through the fall, and incapable of rendering absolute obedience to the Law], God accomplished by sending his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of mankind [that had come under the dominion of Sin], even by an offering for sin, which, though it condemned sin in the flesh, opened up a new way of life under which the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled by us [who are not walking according to the flesh but according to the Spirit]. To such, therefore, there is now no condemnation, for the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus [under the precious blood] hath made us free from the Law Covenant, which convicted all imperfect ones as sinners, and condemned them to death. **Rom. 8:1-4**, paraphrase.

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Those more or less disposed to consider our Lord a sinner, a member of the fallen race, have seized upon this scripture, and attempted to turn it out of harmony with reason, and out of harmony with the other scriptures, to support their theory: to prove that Christ was made exactly like "sinful flesh," and not like flesh that had not sinned--namely, Adam before his transgression. But from the above paraphrase of his text, we believe that the Apostle's thought is clearly brought before the mind of the English reader. Our Lord left the glory of the spirit nature, and was "made flesh," made of the same kind of nature as the race which he came to redeem--the race whose nature, or flesh, had come under the bondage of sin, which was sold under sin, through the disobedience of its first parent, Adam. Nothing here intimates, except in the gloss given through the translation, that our Lord himself was a sinner. Indeed, it is one of the simplest propositions imaginable, that if he were a sinner, or in any manner a partaker of the curse which rested upon the human family, he could not have been our sin-offering, for one sinner could not be an offering for another sinner. Under the divine law, "the wages of sin is death." Our Lord, if he had been in any sense or degree a sinner, would thereby have forfeited his own life, and would have been valueless as a *ransom-price* for Adam or for any other sinner.

"Himself Took Our Infirmities"

--*Matt. 8:17*--

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Isa. 53:4,5

Perfection is the opposite of infirmity, and the fact that our Lord had infirmities might logically be argued as proof that he was not perfect--that he had inherited some of the blemishes of the fallen race. It will be remembered that on the night of his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane our

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Lord sweated "as it were great drops of blood," and this is set down by some medical authorities as a disease, which, altho very rare, has been known to affect others of the human family. It gave evidence of a great nervous strain and weakness. Again, tradition says that when on the way to Golgotha our Lord was compelled to carry the cross, and that he fainted under it, and that it was on this account that Simon, the Cyrenian, was compelled to bear the cross for the remainder of the journey. (*Matt. 27:32*) It is further claimed that our Lord's death on the cross, so much sooner than was usual, was occasioned by a literal breaking of his heart, the rupture of its muscles, and that this is indicated by the flow of both blood and water from the spear-wound in his side after death. At all events, our Lord did not manifest that fulness of vigor which was manifested in Adam, the first perfect man, whose vitality was such that he lived for nine hundred and thirty years. The question arises, Did not these evidences of infirmity on the part of our Lord indicate imperfection: that either through heredity or in some other manner he lacked the powers of a perfect man, and was therefore a blemished man?

On the surface the matter has this appearance, and only under the guidance of the divine Word are we enabled to explain satisfactorily to our own minds, or to others, the consistency between these facts and the Scriptural assurance that our Redeemer was "holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate* from sinners." The key to the matter is given in the scripture under consideration. The prophet declares what would naturally appear to ourselves or to others, viz., that

our Lord, like all the remainder of the race, was stricken, was under sentence of death, was smitten of God and afflicted --as much under the sentence of death as the remainder of the race: but then he shows that what thus seems or appears is not the fact, explaining that it was for our sins, and not for his own sins, that he suffered; his infirmities were the result of bearing our griefs and carrying the load of our sorrow; his death was in consequence of his taking our

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place before the divine law, and suffering, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Speaking for fleshly Israel at the first advent, the Prophet says--We did esteem him to be *stricken, smitten and afflicted of God*: and explaining that such a view was incorrect, he declares--But it was for our transgressions that he was wounded; it was for our iniquities that he was bruised: our peace with God was secured by the chastisement for sin which he bore; our healing was secured by the punishment which he endured for us.

Matthew calls attention to the fulfilment of this very prophecy, declaring--"They brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

Matt. 8:16,17

The connection between the healing of disease, on our Lord's part, and his taking of infirmity upon himself, is not very apparent to the majority of those who read the record. It is generally supposed that our Lord merely exercised a power of healing that cost himself nothing--that he had an inexhaustible power from a spiritual source, unseen, which permitted all manner of miracles, without the slightest impairment of his own strength, his own vitality.

We do not question that "the power of the Highest," bestowed upon our Redeemer without measure, would have enabled him to do many things entirely supernatural, and hence entirely without self-exhaustion: nor do we question that our Lord used this superhuman power--for instance in the turning of the water into wine, and in the miraculous feeding of the multitudes. But, from the record of the Scriptures, we understand that the healing of the sick, as performed by our Lord, was not by the superhuman power at his command, but that on the contrary, in healing the sick he expended upon them a part of *his own vitality*: and consequently,

the greater the number healed, the greater was our Lord's loss of vitality, strength. In proof that this was so,

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call to mind the record of the poor woman who "for twelve years had an issue of blood, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather worse," etc. Remember how with faith she pressed close to the Lord, and touched the hem of his garment, saying within herself, "If I may touch but his clothes I shall be whole." The record is that "straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing within himself that virtue [*vitality*] had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And the disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing, and he said unto her, Daughter thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." **Mark 5:25-34**

Notice also Luke's account (**6:19**) which declares, "And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue [*vitality*] out of him, and healed them all." This, then, was the sense in which our dear Redeemer took the infirmities of humanity, bearing our sicknesses. And the result of thus day by day giving his own vitality for the healing of others, could be no other than debilitating in its effect upon his own strength, his own vitality. And we are to remember that this work of healing, lavishly expending his vitality, was in connection with his preaching and travels, our Lord's almost continuous work during the three and a half years of his ministry.

Nor does this seem so strange to us when we consider our own experiences: who is there of deeply sympathetic nature who has not at times, to a limited degree, witnessed the fact that it is possible for a friend to share the troubles of a friend, and sympathetically to relieve in a measure the depressed one, and to some extent to impart increased vitality and lightness of spirit? But such a helpful influence, and such feeling of the infirmities of others, depends very largely upon the degree of *sympathy* inspiring the one who

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visits the sick and the afflicted. Not only so, but we know that certain animals have varying degrees of sympathy; the dove, for instance, being one of the most gentle and sympathetic, was one of the typical representatives of our Redeemer under the Mosaic dispensation. Because it has been found helpful in many instances, doves are sometimes brought into the chamber of the sick, and are found beneficial to the sufferers. The dove, perhaps because of its sympathetic nature, takes on a certain proportion of the disease, and imparts a certain proportion of its own vitality. This manifests itself in the fact that the birds grow sick (have their limbs drawn up, as with rheumatism, etc.), while the patient is proportionately relieved.

When we remember that our loves and sympathies are only such as have survived the fall of six thousand years, and when we remember that our dear Redeemer was perfect and that therefore in him this quality of sympathetic love abounded in greatest measure, we can realize, faintly, how "he was touched with the feeling of our infirmities." His sympathy was touched, because his nature was fine, perfect, touchable--not hard, not calloused with selfishness and sin, either through heredity or personal acquirement. Again, we read of him that he was "moved with compassion," and again, "He had compassion on the multitude," and again, when he saw the Jews weeping, and Martha and Mary weeping, he was moved with sympathy, and "Jesus wept." So far from these sympathies indicating weakness of character, they indicate the very reverse; for the true character of man, in its image and likeness to the Creator, is not hard and heartless and calloused, but tender, gentle, loving, sympathetic. Hence, all these things go to show to us that he who spake "as never man spake" also sympathized, as none of the fallen race could sympathize, with the fallen conditions, troubles and afflictions of humanity.

Not only so, but we are to remember the very object for which our Lord came into the world. That object was not to

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simply manifest power without cost to himself, but, as he himself explained it, the Son of Man came to minister to others, and to *give his life* a ransom for many. True, the wages of sin was not suffering, but death; and hence suffering on our Lord's part would not alone pay the wages of sin

for us; it was absolutely necessary that he should "*taste death* for every man." Hence we read, "Christ *died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures." (*1 Cor. 15:3*) Nevertheless, it was appropriate that in *taking the sinner's place* our Lord should experience all that was implied in the curse--the penalty of death: and inasmuch as the human family has died, by a process of gradual loss of life, through weakness, sickness and infirmity, it was correspondingly appropriate that our dear Redeemer should pass through this experience also. And since he himself was not the sinner, all the penalties of sin which could rest upon him must be as the result of his *taking the sinner's place*, and *bearing for us* the stroke of Justice.

Our Lord did this, so far as sickness and pain and weakness were concerned, in the best and most helpful manner, viz., by voluntarily pouring out his life, day by day, during the three and a half years of his ministry, giving away his vitality to those who appreciated not his motive--his grace, his love. Thus, as it is written, "He poured out his soul [being, existence] unto death:" "He made his soul [being] an offering for sin." (*Isa. 53:10,12*) And we can readily see that from the time of his consecration, when he was thirty years old, and was baptized of John in Jordan, down to Calvary, he was constantly *pouring out* his soul: vitality was continually going out of him for the help and healing of those to whom he ministered. And while all this would *not have been sufficient* as the price of our sins, yet it was all a part of the dying process through which our dear Redeemer passed, which culminated at Calvary, when he cried, "It is finished," and the last spark of life went out.

It would seem to have been just as necessary that our Lord should thus sacrifice, spend his life-forces, and be

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touched with the experiences of our dying process, as that later, when on the cross, he should be obliged to experience, if only for a moment, the sinner's position of *complete separation* from the Heavenly Father, and the withdrawal of all superhuman help, at the time when he cried, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" As the sinner's *substitute*, he must bear the sinner's penalty in all its particulars, and not until all this was accomplished was his sacrificial mission finished; not until this had been faithfully endured had he passed all the tests deemed of the Father requisite to his being made "the Captain of our Salvation," and exalted far above all angels, and principalities, and powers, to be

the Father's associate in the throne of the Universe.

All of these *experiences* through which the Heavenly Father caused his Beloved Son to pass before exalting him to his own right hand of majesty and committing to his charge the great work of blessing all the families of the earth, were not merely *tests* of the fidelity of the Only Begotten, the *Logos*: the Scriptures assure us that they were necessary also to fit our Lord to sympathize with those whom he thus redeemed, that he might be able to sympathize with and "succor" such as would return to full fellowship with God through him--the Church during this age, the world during the Millennial age: "That he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God"; "in all points tempted like as we are"; one who can have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way; for that he himself also was compassed with infirmities." "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Verily, "Such an High Priest was suitable for us--one holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and exalted higher than the heavens."

Heb. 2:17,18; 4:15,16; 5:2; 7:25,26